

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

15-94

ORLEANS

EAS.706  
& 707

**Town/City:** Town of Eastham

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Eastham Center

**Address:** 2300 State Highway

**Historic Name:** Benaiah G. & Marie T. Higgins House

**Uses:** Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

**Date of Construction:** pre-1880 (1866 deed date)

**Source:** historic maps, deeds

**Style/Form:** undetermined

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone & concrete block

Wall/Trim: wood shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** barn & shed

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): two additions off south side (1<sup>st</sup> one between 1954 and 1976; second after 1976)

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 2.23 acres

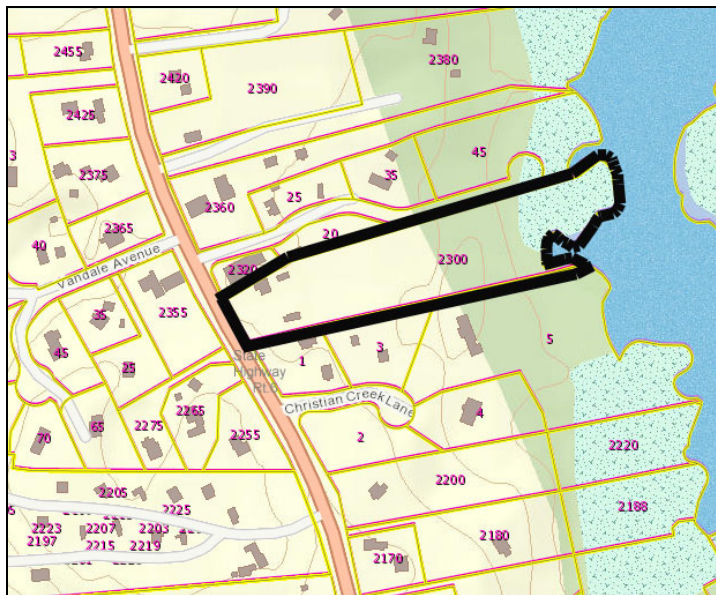
**Setting:** The subject property is located on the east side of State Highway/Rt. 6 one lot south of Christian Creek Ln. It lies within a node of commercial development, with two gas stations, other shops and a post office. On the east it has frontage on Salt Pond Bay along which the Cape Cod National Seashore Park extends covering nearly one half of the parcel.

## Photograph



View from southwest.

## Locus Map (north at top)



**Recorded by:** Larson Fisher Associates, Inc. with Kathryn Grover

**Organization:** Eastham Historical Commission

**Date:** June 2013

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

2300 STATE HIGHWAY

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

EAS.706 &  
707☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The original dwelling on the subject property can still be somewhat distinguished despite alterations and additions it has been subject to over time, but not sufficiently to verify by visual analysis the reputed construction date of 1750. A close examination of the interior and its construction details would be required to determine the feasibility of it having been built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century or even before 1866. The oldest section of the building is undoubtedly the one-and-one-half story section with a gable roof, which most likely would have had a five-bay front facade facing the south as was typical in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, the fenestration on its gable end facing the road has been altered with the introduction of paired windows. Indeed, the windows were all replaced in 2000. The front facade is obscured with what are probably two separate mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century additions. The earlier one, constructed between 1954 and 1976 (see site plans, below) is the one-story with basement, shed-roofed projection having a single stall tuck-under garage and large brick chimney. A new front entrance needed to be created and is now on the west side of that addition. The second addition would have been the basement-level section that infilled the corner of the L-shaped footprint created by the earlier addition. This has a wood deck atop which serves the main floor of the house and is accessed via the relocated front door. It was constructed sometime after 1976; building permits for the additions are unavailable.

The second building on this property is a small cottage or "camp" as it is referred to in early deeds. It was in place by 1950 and may have been a conversion of one of the outbuildings (henhouse?) existing on the property in 1947. This small dwelling is one story in height, has a wood frame construction, a three-bay front facade with center entrance and a low-pitched gable roof. There is a slightly recessed ell on its right (west) side and a larger bedroom addition on the left (east) side that has a taller gable roof.<sup>1</sup> A wood deck off the rear of this latter addition is accessed via sliding glass doors on its south side. A shed behind the house that is visible in the aerial photo (see below) evidently has been removed as the Assessor's building record does not list it.

The sloping yard is terraced so as to accommodate the walk-out front ell and has a retaining wall behind the primary dwelling. The cottage is on the lower, southern part of the property. Wood privacy fencing runs along portions of the south property line. Landscaping is relatively simple with evergreen shrubs as foundation plantings, open lawn and several mature deciduous trees.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Title to 2300 State Highway cannot be reliably traced before May 1866, when Jesse Collins of Eastham sold seven acres with a dwelling house, barn, and outbuildings as well as two other lots to Asa M. Stubbs of Eastham.<sup>2</sup> Collins, a mariner, did not describe the property as his homestead, and Stubbs did not own it for long: in October 1868 he sold the parcel and one opposite it on the west side of State Highway to Roland D. Cobb.<sup>3</sup> The house is shown on an 1880 map with the name "R. Cobb" attached. The dwelling is shown here just south of the property of Timothy Mayo, Jr., and the 1858 map attaches the name "B. L. Higgins" to the same property. Censuses suggest that "B. L. Higgins" was actually Benaiah Gill Higgins (1829-76). Higgins's sister, Maria Holmes Higgins (1839-1915), had married Roland D. Cobb. Given this family connection, it seems possible that the house had earlier been the home of Maria's and Benaiah's parents, David (1804-94) and Sally Swain Higgins, who by 1850 are shown living farther north in the town. Benaiah Gill Higgins, listed as a trader at the time of his death, had married Maria Theresa Dill, daughter of Heman and Caroline Gill Dill of Eastham, in 1851. Perhaps his parents gave the new couple the subject property.

The 1860 census lists Benaiah Higgins as a thirty-year-old master mariner with \$1000 in real property. His household was comprised of his wife Maria and two children, Lillian (b. 1852) and David Gill (b. 1854). The 1870 census enumerates him farther south in Eastham with \$1405 in real property and \$980 of personal property; he was then keeping a store. The couple by then had three more children—Cecilia Florence (b. 1861), Sarah Ann (b. 1863), and Franklin Clifton (b. 1867).<sup>4</sup> Manufacturing schedules for that year's federal census show Higgins as operating a fish packing plant. He died in 1876 and the 1880 census lists his widow Maria and their children Sarah, Franklin, and Ellie Florence (b. 1876) in this neighborhood; it is possible that the Cobbs rented the 2300 State Highway house to them.

Roland D. Cobb was born in Eastham in 1831 the son of Thomas and Priscilla Doane Cobb. In 1866 he married Maria Holmes Higgins, and by 1870 they are shown in this neighborhood with \$900 in real property and a four-year-old daughter, Sarah (or Sally) M. Cobb. Roland Cobb died in 1901 and his widow and unmarried daughter remained in the house until 1921, at which time they sold it to William Hopkins Forrest.<sup>5</sup> William H. Forrest, Sr. was the son of a Virginia native. He and his wife, Ida B.

<sup>1</sup> Town of Eastham records, building permit dated Aug. 13, 2004, to "remove existing rotted bedroom area [and replace] with new foundation and structure; plans on file.

<sup>2</sup> Jesse Collins to Asa M. Stubbs, 12 May 1866, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (hereafter cited as BCD) 91:52. No deed transferring the property from David or Benaiah Higgins to Collins has been located.

<sup>3</sup> Asa M. Stubbs to Rowland D. Cobb, 31 October 1868, BCD 361.

<sup>4</sup> Katherine Elizabeth Chapin Higgins, *Richard Higgins, A Resident and Pioneer Settler at Plymouth and Eastham, Massachusetts, and at Piscatway, New Jersey, and His Descendants* (Worcester, MA: by the author, 1918), 158-59, 354-55, 468.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah M. Cobb to William H. Forrest, 22 October 1921, BCD 382:266.

## INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

EAS.706 &  
707

Grozier Forrest, grew up in Provincetown. His mother died in 1892 and in 1900 he was living in the Provincetown household of his uncle Luther P. Hatch along with his father and two siblings. He was then working as a house painter. He married Carrie L. Knowles in 1901 in Eastham. She was the daughter of John A. and Lucy Cobb Knowles, and he probably moved to Eastham at that point. By 1910 Forrest was working as a life-saving station surfman. He and his wife had adopted a son, Herbert, born about 1907, and Forrest's father was living in their Eastham household.

Forrest lived most of his life on State Highway, where he ran a gas station and a variety store in the 1920s and 1930s just north of the Whispering Pines cottage complex at 2195-2225 State Highway. Tax records for 1926 show him with a dwelling valued at \$1725 (probably 2300 State Highway), a barn, poultry house, and garage, a cottage, a "roadside store," several outbuildings, a water system and a lighting plant. His homestead lot was seven acres, suggesting it was the State Highway property, and he owned 54.5 acres in other parcels. The 1930 census shows him as a store proprietor living on State Highway with his wife, son Herbert, then a truck driver, Herbert's wife, and a domestic servant. By 1931 Forrest had built a "ladies rest room," a pump house, an "oil house," and a "camp house" to his property holdings, probably all on the west side of State Highway. In that year he was taxed on a seven-acre homestead lot, which, according to later tax records, was on the east side of State Highway, almost certainly 2300.

In 1946 Forrest sold the land on the east side of State Highway—reserving for himself a house lot on the north side of the lot—to William T. and Dorothy M. Shaw of Quincy. Tax records for 1947 list the Shaws with 5.7 acres, a house valued at \$2800, a barn, a garage, and a hen house. In November 1947 the Shaws sold part of the property, including the house, to Charles W. and Anna B. Montgomery of North Adams. Tax records for 1954 show Anna Montgomery as owner of 3.38 acres, a house worth \$3000, and a "camp" valued at \$800. Charles Montgomery was born in 1896 in North Adams; he was a World War I veteran, a weaver, and a foreman at North Adams's Arnold Print Works for most of his working life. He and his wife owned 2300 State Highway until their deaths. They may have been the owners when the Cape Cod Seashore National Park was developed and acquired the eastern portion of the parcel that has water frontage on Salt Pond Bay, unless this was the portion of the property retained by the Shaws in 1947.<sup>6</sup> In 1978 Francis R. and Mary I. Storms acquired the property from Anna Montgomery's estate. Francis Storms died in Eastham in 1980, and by July 1990 Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank had acquired 2300 State Highway through mortgage default. The bank sold the property, which then included 2.23 acres, to current owner Kristina K. Field in December 1990.

<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to determine exactly when that acquisition occurred because of the plethora of deeds under the name of United States, but hearings regarding the establishment of the park occurred in the 1960s. United States Congress, Senate Committee on the Interior, *Cape Cod National Seashore Park. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, United States Senate, Eighty-sixth Congress, first[-second] session, on S. 2636, a bill to provide for the establishment of Cape Cod National Seashore Park* (Hearings held Dec. 9-June 21, 1960 in various cities, Volume 1) (Washington : U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1960) pp. 63-66. from <<http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/united-states-congress-senate-committee-on-interior/cape-cod-national-seashore-park-hearings-before-the-subcommittee-on-public-land-tin/page-10-cape-cod-national-seashore-park-hearings-before-the-subcommittee-on-public-land-tin.shtml>>

<sup>7</sup> William H. Forrest to William T. and Dorothy M. Shaw, 31 May 1946, BCD 648:232; William T. and Dorothy M. Shaw to Charles W. and Anna B. Montgomery, 28 November 1947, BCD 684:62; Joseph E. Doyle Jr., to Francis R. and Mary I. Storms, 22 February 1978, BCD 2677:347; Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank, holder of mortgage from Mary I. Storms, to Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank, 30 July 1990, BCD 7253:177; Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank, Harwich, to Kristina K. Field, 7 December 1990, BCD 7380:96. See also "Plan of Properties in Eastham, Mass.," November 1950, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Plan (hereafter cited as BCP) 96:39, and "Plan of Land in Eastham, Mass. as Surveyed for Francis R. and Mary I. Storms," 6 February 1978, BCP 321:2.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

2300 STATE HIGHWAY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	EAS.706 & 707
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## MAPS

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# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

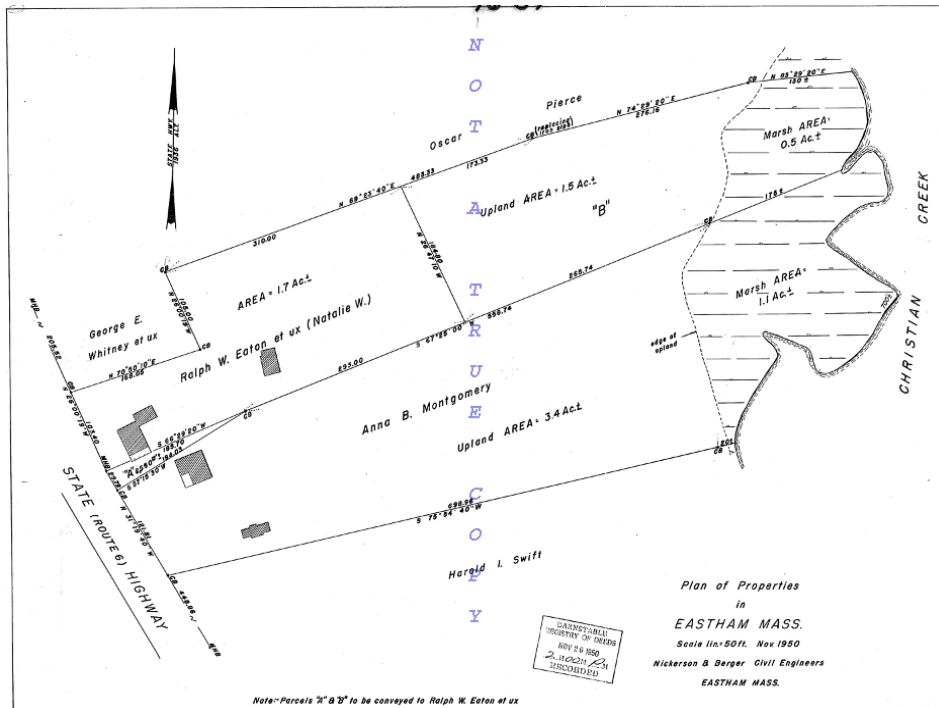
2300 STATE HIGHWAY

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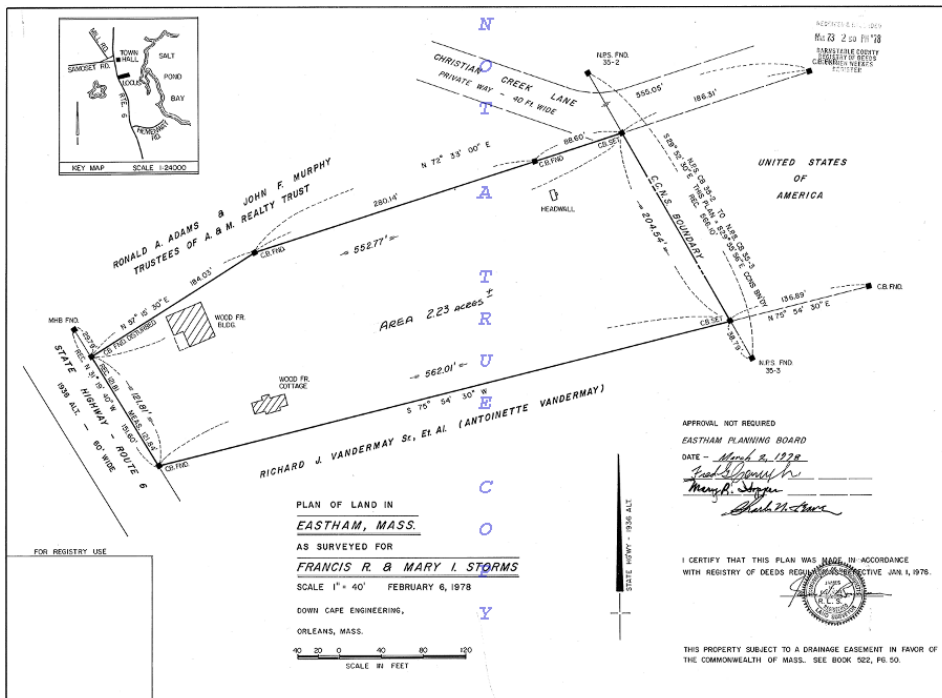
Area(s) Form No.

EAS.706 &  
707

## SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



The subject property at 2300 State Highway is the southernmost, 3.4-acre, parcel marked "Anna B. Montgomery" on this 1950 subdivision plan (BCP 96:39).



The primary house at 2300 State Highway is the upper building on the 2.23-acre parcel in this 1976 plan; the "camp" listed in 1954 tax records is the wood-frame cottage southwest of the house. Note the boundary of the Cape Cod National Seashore Park that covers much of the property (BCP 321:2).

## PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-2013 unless otherwise noted)



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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2300 STATE HIGHWAY

Area(s) Form No.

	EAS.706 & 707
--	------------------



EAS.706: View from southwest.



Aerial view from west (courtesy of Bing Maps online).



View of primary dwelling from northwest.



EAS.707: View of cottage or "camp" from northwest.